

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1341
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USMISSION USNATO
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C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 4887

E.O. 11652:GDS
TAGS: IT UR
SUBJECT: SOVIETS REQUEST SHIP REPAIR FACILITIES IN NAPLES

REF: STATE 55989

1. DRAWING ON TALKING POINTS CONTAINED REFTEL, AMBASSADOR
MARCH 13 AGAIN DISCUSSED WITH MFA SEC GEN Malfatti QUESTION OF
SOVIET MERCHANT SHIP REPAIRS IN PORTS USED BY ITALIAN AND
ALLIED NAVAL VESSELS.

2. Malfatti AGREED WITH THE POINTS MADE BY THE AMBASSADOR
BUT DID NOT COMMENT SPECIFICALLY SUGGESTING THAT ISSUE COULD APPROPRIATE
LY BE DISCUSSED AT NATO.

3. ITALIAN SHIPYARDS ARE UNDERUTILIZED AND SOURCE OF CONSID-
ERABLE UNEMPLOYMENT. IT SEEMS MOST UNLIKELY UNDER THESE CIRCUM-
STANCES THAT THE ITALIANS WOULD INITIATE DISCUSSIONS AT NATO
OF THE ISSUE OF SOVIET USE OF THOSE FACILITIES. AND RAISE QUES-
TIONS ANSWERS TO WHICH MIGHT NOT BE WELCOME. THERE IS LITTLE
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DOUBT THAT THE ITALIAN MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT IS
OPPOSED TO GIVING SOVIET MERCHANT FLEET ACCESS TO
PORTS WHERE THERE IS AN ALLIED NAVAL PRESENCE. AT THE
SAME TIME IT WOULD PROBABLY ACCEPT INCREASED ACCESS
TO REPAIR FACILITIES IN PORTS (GENOA, TRIESTE, PALERMO
FOR EXAMPLE) WHERE THERE IS NO SUCH INSTALLED PRESENCE.
WE SUSPECT THE ITALIAN MILITARY AND GOVERNMENT LEADER-

SHIP WOULD WELCOME THE BENEDICTION OF THE U.S. AND OTHER ALLIES ON THAT POSITION, WHILE HAVING FOR INTERNAL GOVERNMENT CONSUMPTION A CLEAR INDICATION OF ALLIED CONCERN ABOUT SOVIET MERCHANT SHIP ACCESS TO PORTS THAT ARE HOME TO ITALIAN AND ALLIED NAVAL UNITS.

2. AS THE ITALIANS ARE NOT LIKELY TO INITIATE CONSULTATIONS IN NATO ON THIS QUESTION AND AS THERE SEEMS TO BE EVIDENCE OF A VIRTUAL COAMPAIGN BY THE USSR TO FIND SHIP REPAIR FACILITIES IN THE MEDITERRANENA, WE SUGGEST THAT USNATO BE AUTHORIZED TO SEEK THE INTRODUCTION OF THIS QUESTION INTO AN APPROPRIATE ALLIED CONSULTATIVE FORUM. IN CONSULTATION WITH ITALIAN DELEGATION.GARDNER

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